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INSIDE TODAY

U.S. NEWS

LETHAL INJECTION



Renee Berlon, from Ohioans to Stop Executions, stands outside the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility during final preparations for the execution of Kenneth Biros Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009, in Lucasville, Ohio.

Read more on Page B3

SPORTS NEWS

IVERSON RETURNS



Philadelphia 76ers' Allen Iverson calls out a play to teammates in the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Denver Nuggets, Monday, Dec. 7, 2009, in Philadelphia. Denver won 93-83.

Read more on Page B10

New collection arrives

ViceVersa new collection 'A Season To Shine'



ORANJESTAD – Recently, ViceVersa Clothing & Beauty Salon hosted a fashion cocktail event at the doorstep of the boutique. Dazzling models

show cased a wonderful array of holiday fashions for invited guests to enjoy. “A Season to Shine in 2009” was a great hit amongst attendees

At Arawak Gardens in Palm Beach

Fishes & More opens new dining room

PALM BEACH - Fishes & More is proud to open it's recently renovated new dining room in the Arawak Gardens in Palm Beach. This popular restaurant specializes in fresh fish and seafood, and at the same time please the non-fish lovers as well. All the dishes are prepared a la minute by an internationally experienced kitchen team, which gives the twist to our dishes. Influences from all over the world are found back on the menu and they are already well known for our daily changing specials.

Ideally located in front of the Occidental Resort, they are visited both by individuals and families alike with a great kids menu to entertain them, so they can enjoy their dinner as much as you will yours!

There is entertainment every night at 8PM, and even after dinner the perfect night out continues, as you can shop till you drop since the shops on our friendly square are open until eleven.

See what its like to experience real fresh dining joy with a twist!☐

the event and especially of the new collection launch for the holidays. This is a season to shine @ Vice Versa with a fabulous collection in store now...limited designs from New York... Store hours from 9 am till 7 pm..weekend from 9 am till 8 pm..

*More on paged * & 9*

~ Photos by Julia Renfro ~



Boat runs out of steam!

Sinterklaas arrives late at Maris Stella home



ORANJESTAD - Sometimes life surprises you and bad things have a way of turning into good things. That is what happened to Sinterklaas and his helper Zwarte Piet. The two, tired after the extensive celebrations on Sinterklaas' birthday on December 5, missed the steamboat that was to take them back to Spain. Both Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet were desolate: what to do now?

But then providence stepped in: the steam boat encountered heavy seas at Cabez , ran out of steam and had to return to Aruba. Sinterklaas was overjoyed: this way he could still pay a visit to Maris Stella, the home for the elderly at Savaneta, and then catch his ride to Spain at Zeerovers pier. So, on December 8, Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet made an overdue visit to the happy elderly, bringing gifts



and cheer to the group. As the Clown Doctors of Aruba happened to be present on Tuesday mornings, the event was lively, cheerful and hilarious.

Photos show Sinterklaas, not remorseful at all anymore about missing his boat, and his very naughty Zwarte Piet at Maris Stella in Savaneta. Well done, Sinterklaas! □



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IFA throws a holiday party at De Suikertuin



ORANJESTAD – The sugar garden, De Suikertuin in the venue for Saturday night's



annual Holiday Party hosted by the International Friends of Aruba.

The restaurant opened its doors in the evening hours to accommodate IFA members in quest of a cozy holiday affair. The festive crowd enjoyed the open bar and each other's great company over delicious Suikertuin appetizers. We understand the after-party at Garufa cocktail lounge was equally lively and included dancing to C-Zar Olarte and Angelo Figueroa's combo.

Located at Wilhelminastraat 64, De Suikertuin offers both indoor and outdoor seating for breakfast and lunch every day in a warm & friendly local atmosphere.

For more information about joining International Friends of Aruba, please go to www.ifaruba.com.

Thank you Clelia Douglas, for putting together a much-enjoyed Holiday Party, with a fantastic turnout. □





Special Month of December!

Appetizer

- Fish Soup
- Onion Soup
- Conch Fritters
- Escargot
- Salad

Entrée

- **Fresh Catch of the Day** prepared by our local chef just the way you like it.
- **Jumbo Shrimp** from our local waters, breaded served with potato or rice or with garlic tossed over linguine.
- **Filet Mignon** 8 oz. US Tenderloin
- **Grilled Boneless Chicken Breast**

Dessert

- Chocolate or Banana Cake
- Ice Cream
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3-course dinner
\$24 per person

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Employees Christmas Brunch at Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa



PUNTA BRAVO - The Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa team celebrated Christmas together at the French Steakhouse on December 2, 2009! Executive-Chef George Hoek and his tremendous team with chef Ronald Daal, sous-



chef Willy Sarmiento along with the rest of the kitchen crew prepared an outstanding and culinary brunch buffet for the staff to enjoy. Santa Claus walked around the property and invited everyone to join the party to enjoy the delicious food accompanied by beautiful live Christmas music of Sharon Rose and Eddy Samson. During the dessert, it was time to put some of our employees in the spotlight for their outstanding performance this past year. The first award was given to the maintenance crew for being the Department of the Year for 2009. The award for Manager of the Year was bestowed the resort's reservation manager Vivian Frank. Chef Ronald Daal received the Lifetime Achievement Award for almost 30 years of dedication and hard work to the company and its guests. The Employee of the Year awards were handed out to

the top 3 best-performing employees being: 2nd runner-up Harold Rasmijn of the French Steakhouse for his eagerness and extreme hospitality towards our guests. First runner-up was for the always friendly, hard working and cheerful Jean Cadet of the housekeeping department. Our guests just love Jean! The first place was for superman Kevin Barnett of the beach department for keeping our wide-stretch of beach the most beautiful on the island and for greeting and welcoming our guests with a great smile day in and day out. This successful afternoon ended with a tremendous show of Grupo di Betico whose swinging music pulled everyone on the dance floor. The management of Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa would like to thank all the employees once again for their hard work, dedication and loyalty to our intimate resort! □

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Holidays at "The Casino" ...sweet!

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Come and enjoy the fun while you indulge in the true magic of Christmas

Come and be our guest. The holidays at The Casino are a real treat.

Nilda Echobardo is Manager of the Semester



EAGLE BEACH -- Having been the runner up in the previous semester, Nilda Echobardo stepped up her efforts and landed the Manager of the Semester award at La



Cabana Beach & Racquet Club.

Her colleagues call her a natural leader and an inspiration, and guests don't even have to call, as Nilda is always there with her housekeeping colleagues anticipating their needs and delivering terrific service with charisma and style.

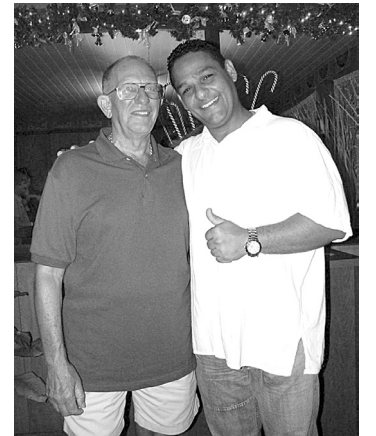
Runner ups Walter Kelly and Aishelle Lynch are powerhouses in their own right, having won multiple honors in the past, as the cream of the crop among the resort managers.

Nilda, Walter & Aishelle were cited for their tremendous contributions on behalf of guests and colleagues, at the



fun Managers Outing. Riding the windowless bus, for sunset happy hour, managers were also treated to some more fun at a local restaurant, over food

& cocktails. General Manager Joe Najjar publicly lauded the many gifts they bring to their job and thanked them on behalf of the board of directors. □



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*** HUMAN HINTS ***

Enlightenment and Emotion 2

Yesterday, we discussed how Students of Enlightenment might better deal with our intensely emotional lives. What do we do when three-dimensional crap happens? What do we do when our emotions swallow us whole and threaten to obliterate our existence? What do we do on

a daily basis, when there is no end in sight to our monotonous yet uncertain existence? The answer that you might not want to hear is that we must embrace our emotion every change we get. When we try to escape what we feel, we miss the point. Our emotions connect our infinite spirit to

three dimensional limitation. We feel a certain way for a reason.

When we understand the underlying cause behind what we feel, we see the weakness in our foundation and we can figure out how to strengthen those specific areas of our selves. Your emotions point to the areas of your self that require your attention the most.

Embracing our emotion is one thing. The trick is that

we must embrace our emotion without letting it overcome us. We've all been depressed, and we have all experienced the attraction of the Black Hole of Despair. We all know how good it feels to surrender to emotion, to let go and allow it to envelop us without resistance, and we all know that there is a point where we must stop the self-indulgence, lest we lose ourselves in it.

We must separate our emotions from the physical outcome of our efforts, while pursuing our lives with as much passion as we can possibly muster. It's the game that matters, not who wins or loses. As long as you play as hard as you possibly can and do everything within the rules to do the best you can, you win. The challenge is within you. External competition only represents the internal competition inside each of us.

We're not separating our emotions from our daily lives. We're separating our emotions from the RESULT of our daily lives, while conducting our daily lives with unrestrained passion.

Knowing in the face of any turmoil that three dimensions is not real should help us to separate our emotions from the physical, but the illusion always seems the most real just when it's most important to remember that it's not. We all know that nothing feels more real than emotional pain, and we all know that nothing can be more debilitating to our entire Being.

that everything will work out for the best for everyone. Stop trying to control other people's destiny.

Even if they are your kids, their spirit has plans for them that supersede your plans for them. Emotional pain only exists because of our emotional resistance.

When we can't seem to change anything, be patient with the time delay, and be patient with yourself. Use the energy of frustration to work harder on transforming your situation, and on transforming yourself. Let go of trying to control situations and people. Lighten up and enjoy your journey. Stop taking it all so seriously, because it's going to work out for everyone no matter what.

Until Tomorrow...

~Quentin Danziger

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought.

HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

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Reindeer on Aruba?

Unusual wildlife spotted on the roof of Papillon Restaurant



PALM BEACH - A pair of most unusual animals may be spotted on the roof of Papillon Restaurant in The Village, across from the Radisson Resort these days. Two reindeer, clearly having lost their way, are frolicking high up, dressed in twinkling little lights, inviting guests

to come and enjoy a terrific dinner - French-Caribbean style. They are not alone on the roof, though, because they are pulling the sled of a celebrity, Santa Claus, who is firmly keeping a tight rein on his reindeer. This is the first year that Papillon Restaurant is open

for Christmas, as the prison-themed, elegant place only opened its doors on January 1, 2009. By now Papillon is a top restaurant, which perfectly combines casual chic with fine dining. The interior winks at Henri Charrière, the most famous convict in the world, who escaped from Devil's Island in the mid 1940's.

As Christmas 2009 is almost here already, it is high time to start thinking about making reservations at Papillon, where guests may order à la carte or select one of the restaurant's special Christmas menus. These menus offer choices in appetizers and entrees.

For instance one could choose the Lobster Bisque or Tuna Trio, the Angus Beef & Lobster, the Sea Bass or Surf and Turf. Following European tradition, there is still game available, so that could be an option as well. Special wine arrangements are suggested by the excellent, knowledgeable staffers. □



Fine & Affordable Dining at Pam Pam Restaurant

Meet Chef Ludwich Samson and his exquisite menu now unveiled!



Nestled in the quiet neighborhood of Boegoeroei, Perle d'Or apartment complex houses Dutch students and vacationers, as well as a cozy garden eatery, Pam Pam Restaurant & Bar. Aiming to attract a more diverse clientele, Pam Pam has recently adopted a more upscale dining concept. In order to pilot this new concept, rising local chef Ludwich Samson was brought on board, and in just two months on the job, he has

more than proven his worth.

Laid-back, refreshingly young, and ambitious, Ludwich began his career as a chef by enrolling in Aruba's hospitality and culinary arts school—the best decision he has ever made, he wholeheartedly claims. With ten years in the kitchen and three years as a chef, Ludwich has developed an impressive arsenal of cooking skills. He attributes the majority of his growth as a chef to his years

of working under his mentor, Vittorio Muscarello, owner of Hostaria Da'Vittorio and one of the most highly respected chefs on Aruba.

In his two months with Pam Pam, Ludwich has entirely remodeled the kitchen to make it more efficient. He has also created a whole new menu featuring particularly unique dishes in order to distinguish Pam Pam from the endless number of restaurants along Aruba's hotel strip. While the menu still offers Dutch snacks and typical Dutch platters like sate to appease the many Dutch interns residing at Perle d'Or, the rest of the menu offers upscale fusion cuisine. Lemon grass and chillies give several seafood dishes a Thai flair; homemade ravioli and beef carpaccio salute Italy; crustacean ceviche adds a Peruvian element; and Indonesian spices add zest to a handful of casual main dishes.

Ludwich also craftily adds little unexpected twists to some classic dishes, elevating the uniqueness of his menu. One of his personal favorites is his porcini-crusted filet mignon served with a thyme red-wine reduction. He also delights in the fact that most diners have a hard time figuring out the sweet and spicy deliciousness of his signature crustacean platter. Other interesting interpretations include lump-crab lollipops, chicken cordon blue unorthodoxly stuffed with ricotta and bacon, and for dessert, tiramisu that promises an untraditional layer of decadent Bailey's chocolate mousse.

Needless to say, Ludwich is creative in the kitchen and works extremely hard, currently putting in 12 to 16 hours a day, seven days a week; but he insists that this is not what makes a good chef good. "I simply love what



I do for a living," confides Ludwich, and this is what guarantees success in the kitchen and contented diners. Of course, being a chef can be downright stressful, but Ludwich thrives on the rush of adrenaline on busy nights. And when he peers out of the kitchen and sees a restaurant full of people enjoying their meals, he experiences immense satisfaction. For reservations call: 5877710 or 7483848, or visit us at www.pampamaruba.com. □

ViceVersa new collection 'A Season To Shine'

Continued from Front Page



~ Photos by Julia Renfro ~



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Live Music & Entertainment tonight at Casa Tua Barcelona



ORANJESTAD - As of this week our Flamenco Show will be extended with the performance of Kavey Yarzagaray. This Flamenco guitar player will perform together with Angela Croes on Wednesdays and Fridays. Enjoy your Paella and Sangria together with this fantastic live show! The downtown atmosphere is cool and relaxed with its in- and outside seating. The highlight at Casa Tua Barcelona is also the new lunch specials every weekday from Monday till Friday! **A \$9.95 lunch special; Beef tenderloin with a red wine sauce or choose the Grouper Fillet for \$11.95. Both dishes include a soft drink. Fresh Fish lovers can treat the palate to the Whole Red**



Snapper, served with Rice and a salad for \$19.95. For entertainment, Casa Tua Barcelona offers rhythms of salsa & bolero & Cha Cha Cha performed by a live band every Saturday Nights! El Latin Son will perform tonight!! All days of the week we serve Cold and Hot tapas as appetizers or the delicious Iberian Ham Pata Negra which we import directly from Andalucía. As your main course you could choose our Paella, traditionally prepared on the spot by our chef! Combine this Spanish dish with our home-made sangria to complete your dinner. Of course we saved the best for last as no one does an ending better than Casa Tua with their dreamy Tiramisu. If you're into something different we suggest tasting the Espresso Martini Cocktail as dessert, you won't be disappointed. The best part about such a good ending is that it guarantees you'll be back for more...



Casa Tua Barcelona Downtown open from 11.30am to 10.30pm, Sunday from 5pm to 11pm tel. 588 5695. Casa Tua Palm Beach open from 5pm to 11pm, tel 586 8470

Larimar Spa wines and unwinds travel professionals



PALM BEACH – A site inspection combined with cocktails at Larimar Spa and elegant dinner on the beach impressed members of the last destination review for this year, all top meeting planners from the USA, who were looking into booking a number of groups to the Aruba, at different properties next year. The Destination Review attendees were met at the Radisson Aruba Resort Spa & Casino by sales manager Vicky Perez and at the end of

a short tour of the property the group convened at Larimar Spa for a cocktail party. Director of Spa Services Bruce Caven was prepared with his staff to receive the dignitaries, with champagne cocktails and relaxing chair massages. Pictured here the guests, from all over the USA including the representatives of Cox Communications and American Express, enjoying the serene environment of Larimar Spa, co-hosted by the Aruba Tourism Authority

and the Aruba Convention Bureau. Larimar Spa, on Conde Nast Traveler hot spa list, features a spacious relaxation area, steam, sauna and cold plunge, boutique and a state of the art fitness center featuring a wide variety of services from the traditional to the exotic for both women and men in 13,000 square feet of pure indulgence. Larimar Spa offers a full service hair salon with two dedicated in-house stylists



who specialize in weddings and gala events, also new Tooth Whitening service, with certificated dental technician Genoveva Bregita. The spa recently introduced a brand

new Lava Shell massage that is both dreamy and relaxing, designed to especially delight fans of the popular hot-stone massage. □





By: Dr Carlos Viana

We are blessed to live in the land of endless sunshine. There's nothing "SAD" about being able to go barefoot and enjoy blue skies every day. Sometimes though, on our tiny island, life can seem, well, tiny. Phyllis' antidote to "tiny" is to vacation in the big city. New York City, especially during the holidays energizes her. But after a week of nothing but grey skies, Phyllis begins to feel what our friends up north call the winter blue's or Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Luckily, we get to come home to daily sunshine and blue skies before it becomes a problem. For those of you not so lucky to experience only a week or two of winter grey it can cause more than a passing moment of "sad" feelings.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that often occurs in winter throughout the Northern and Southern Hemispheres due to lack of light and sunshine. It is rare in people living near the equator, where daylight hours are long. In individuals affected by this disorder, the symptoms usually recur each winter, starting between September and November and continuing until March or April; and although SAD may begin at any age, the typical age of onset is between eighteen and thirty. In addition to symptoms of depression, most sufferers show signs of a weakened immune system during the winter and are more vulnerable to infections and other illnesses, while in spring and autumn they

Blue-Grey (SAD)

may have extreme mood changes and short periods of hypomania (overactivity). For some people, SAD produces symptoms severe enough to cause considerable stress and disrupt their lives. SAD symptoms usually disappear automatically in spring or when affected individuals travel to sunnier climates.

A diagnosis of SAD can be made after three or more consecutive winters of symptoms, which include the following:

- Desire to oversleep and difficulty staying awake
- Disturbed sleep
- Feelings of fatigue and inability to handle daily routine
- Craving carbohydrates and sweets
- Feelings of misery, guilt, apathy or loss of feelings
- Irritability
- Reduced self-esteem
- Desire to avoid social contact
- Tension and inability to tolerate stress
- Decreased interest in sex and physical contact

If relocating to a sunnier location is not possible, SAD can be treated in several ways. First, individuals can buy lightbulbs labeled, "full-spectrum". Full-spectrum bulbs are similar to natural daylight because the light is perceived to have the color and brightness of daylight. Daylight is a form of energy that travels in various wavelengths. Daylight, because it includes all

wavelengths that are visible to the human eye, is considered full spectrum.

When SAD leads to depression, it can be treated with standard antidepressant drugs, or if these are ineffective, relief may be found in 5HTP (hydroxytryptophan), the precursor to serotonin, which plays an important role in regulating mood, sleep, sexuality, appetite, and vomiting. The benefits of 5HTP, which, unlike other antidepressants, affects only the brain, are very similar to those of L-tryptophan, such as aiding sleep, alleviating age-related depression, and minimizing effects of alcohol withdrawal. But 5HTP must not be taken with other serotonin-enhancing drugs, such as L-tryptophan or Prozac, without the guidance of a physician since this may cause severe side effects, including mania, anxiety, and dermatitis.

In addition, depression caused by SAD can be treated with acupuncture. Traditional Chinese medicine, believes that heat, cold, wind, dampness, dryness, and summer heat are six external climatic forces that can invade the human organism and create disharmony in body, mind, and spirit. Acupuncture can help people who suffer from SAD achieve a more balanced state.

The effects of SAD can be prevented or minimized by remaining physically active during the fall and winter months. Try winter outdoor

activities such as skating, skiing. Jogging, walking the dog or playing outside with the kids can still be enjoyed in winter, but the right clothing and warming up is essential. Make sure you start earlier to catch the shorter daylight hours for safety and enjoyment. If you can't take the cold, switch to indoor stretches and exercises such as swimming, yoga, or try salsa lessons. These are excellent ways to maintain a healthy mind and body. Getting enough quality rest and staying connected with friends and family or getting professional help is important for emotional support.

As a clinical nutritionist, I can never say enough about eating healthy and staying hydrated. In the cold you may not sweat and therefore not realize you are dehydrated. However many indoor heating systems are drying, get a home humidifier if necessary. Including immune supporting supplements like vitamin C, Zinc, Cats claw, Reishi, Shiitake and Maitake Mushrooms can make a difference. Add B complex to your program, to support strength and energy and 5HTP for "blue" feelings.

Get the Point. Don't spend another winter being SAD. With a little effort, you can adjust your lifestyle to the seasons. Plan and shop ahead for healthy meals. Stock up on immune system and mood supporting supplements. Schedule time and find new ways to exercise, with a friend if possible. Invest in full spectrum lightbulbs. Try acupuncture;



stay active physically, mentally and emotionally with supportive friends, family and professionals. Of course, a winter getaway to a sunny place like Aruba could help you turn your grey skies to a brighter shade of blue. If you're visiting our sunny island and would like more information, call us for an appointment.

CARLOS VIANA, Ph. D. is an Oriental Medical Doctor (O.M.D.) having studied in China; a US Board Cert. Clinical Nutritionist (C.C.N.), an Addiction Professional (C.Ad.), Chairperson of the Latin American Committee of the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology (IAOMT), a Rejuvenating Cell Therapist specializing in Age Management, has a weekly radio program, writes and lectures extensively. For information: VIANA HEALING CENTER, Kibaima 7, St Cruz TEL: 585-1270 Web Site: www.vianaheal.com

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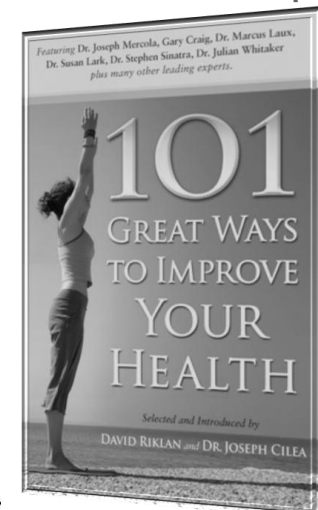
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Sustainable route development focus of key airline conference

DAWN BEACH--“Creating the Right Environment for Sustainable Route Development” was the theme of the Network Latin America Conference, hosted by Princess Juliana International Airport (PJIA), which opened Monday at The Westin Dawn Beach Resort closed on Tuesday.

The highlight of the conference was a panel discussion, moderated by former LIAT executive Mark Darby, which included President of the Princess Juliana Airport operating company (PJIAE) Eugene Holiday, Senior Director of Strategic Planning at AirTran John Kirby and Planning and Statistics Director at GOL Airlines Mauricio Emboaba.

The discussion focussed on, among other things, the ability for airlines to sustain a new route through proper research. It was said that routes were often poorly researched and developed based on promises from local authorities, only to eventually find out that passenger numbers had been unrealistic, causing the airline to ultimately pull out of the destination.

Panellists agreed that developing sustainable plans and creating the right environment that will allow airlines to take advantage of opportunities is the

more viable way in developing routes. Holiday told the gathering that PJIA’s strategic approach is aimed at maintaining St. Maarten’s position as a premier tourist destination; a position that can only be ensured by offering airlines, passengers and other users, airport, air traffic control and commercial services, the highest possible industry standards. “To do that our actions are guided by clear objectives,” he said.

“In 2008, PJIAE, in striving to fulfil our mission and promise to our communities, served over 1.7 million passengers, 50 per cent of whom came from North America, and handled some 71,000 aircraft, which transported these passengers through an extensive network of air services connecting St. Maarten/St. Martin and surrounding islands to North America, South and Central America, and Europe,” Holiday said.

He added that the activities of PJIAE on the island translate in major economic spin-offs, as shown in the chart, by the strong correlation between the economic growth on the island and passenger growth at PJIA. This, he stressed, makes PJIA the island’s single, most important strategic asset.

“Expanding existing services and

developing new routes is essential in that regard.

For PJIAE and St. Maarten this calls for continued action aimed at increasing and diversifying our airlift by seeking to, among others, establish air services from Latin America,” he said.

“The annual Network Conference is an excellent forum for this purpose. I therefore welcome this opportunity for us, as airlines and airports, to join and network in search of new and mutually beneficial opportunities for our companies. This is especially important in the current challenging economic conditions, with demand for travel to the region down significantly and to St. Maarten down by almost 10 per cent,” he added.

Network Latin America is organized annually by Airline Business magazine, the leading strategic title for airline executives, with a global reach of 25,000 senior readers. The event features some 180 delegates.

Held previously in Aruba, it is a conference where delegates will listen to and debate route planning strategy with key industry players. The meeting provides aviation executives with a platform for scheduled one-to-one meetings and also features an exhibition. □

Intermediary class added to Air France-KLM flights

WILLEMSTAD--The Air France-KLM alliance has added a new product to the Economy Class on the mid-Atlantic between Schiphol and St. Maarten, Bonaire and Curaçao: Economy Comfort.

In response to customer demands, KLM has come with an intermediary class between World Business Class and Economy Class, offering the economy class passenger a greater range of seating comfort. Depending on the type of aircraft, 34 or 40 seats are located for this purpose in the front rows in the Economy Class.

On all flights aboard various types of aircraft, among them Boeing 747 and MD 11, passengers can now choose to pay extra either online, at KLM’s office or at the travel agent for a place in the economy comfort seating zone at the front of the Economy Class.

Once there, the traveller enjoys the usual economy class service on longer haul flights, but for greater comfort these chairs offer the traveller up to 10 cm more legroom and back supports that recline up to twice as far. An additional advantage is that the passengers in the front rows of the aircraft are among the first ones to leave the plane after landing at the destination. From 90 days prior to the flight, Economy Comfort can be booked online via www.KLM.com, or 30 hours before departure via Internet check-in, as long as there are seats available in the Economy Comfort zone. Loyal KLM clients can benefit even more via their Flying Blue membership. □



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'Sending back Antilleans is banishment, medieval'

~ Dordrecht Mayor Bandell supports equal rights ~

By Suzanne Koelega

DORDRECHT--Dordrecht Mayor Ronald Bandell is not in favour of sending back criminal Antillean youngsters living in the Netherlands. In fact, he is squarely against it: "That is banishment. It is medieval."

According to the departing mayor, the Netherlands should assume a less arrogant attitude regarding the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba.

Bandell (63) is one of those few representatives who dare taking a critical position where it comes to his own government and country. "The Netherlands is good in sending, but not in receiving. We should listen more and have a true conversation. We don't always know it better," said Bandell, who is going on pension February 1, 2010, in his farewell interview with this newspaper. "We are known for being a rude people and a certain degree of modesty would be to our credit."

The city of Dordrecht and St. Maarten have a special relation. Parties signed a twinning agreement last month that facilitates cooperation between their fire departments. Exchange of information, knowledge and skills is the most important aspects. The South-Holland South Police Force, under which Dordrecht resorts, is cooperating with St. Maarten's Police Force.

Bandell was very positive about the cooperation with St. Maarten. He stressed that the cooperation wasn't only one-way traffic, from the Netherlands to St. Maarten, as is so often the case. "We can learn from St. Maarten. They are multi-functional, achieve a lot with little means, they are creative and flexible. Culturally things seem to work out as well," he said.

Respect

The relation between Dordrecht and St. Maarten shows that respect and mutual understanding are possible in the Kingdom. Relations in the Kingdom and especially the role of the Netherlands have a lot to do with respect.

"If you are a guest somewhere, you behave. If you visit someone, you don't make degrading statements about someone's house either. You don't have to love each other, but you have to treat each other with decency," said Bandell about the relations in the Kingdom.

The Dutch have to behave when

they are on the islands, but that also counts for Antilleans living in the Netherlands. Bandell doesn't justify crime, but it should be acknowledged that the majority of Antilleans are doing just fine. Dordrecht has a large cluster of Antilleans, mostly from Curaçao and Bonaire. A small group is criminal.

According to Bandell, many people in the Netherlands are not sufficiently informed where it comes to Antilleans. Antilleans suffer because of generalisations like "All Antilleans are criminal."

"People should look more closely at who comes to the Netherlands and why. Many come from poor families and migrate to the Netherlands in search of a better future." Antilleans coming to the Netherlands should be coached and guided, also those youngsters showing criminal behaviour.

Bandell saw the poor living conditions with his own eyes when he visited Curaçao for the first time in 2002, two years after his appointment as mayor of Dordrecht. Together with Dordrecht's Chief Prosecutor and Police Chief he visited districts like Seru Fortuna and Koraal Specht. He immediately understood why people from these districts were going to the Netherlands.

Escalate

Problems started to escalate around 2002 in 18 Dutch municipalities with high concentrations of Antilleans. Dordrecht was one of those municipalities and today is still one of the 23 so-called "Antillean municipalities" that receive additional funding from the Dutch Government to tackle Antillean high-risk youngsters. Bandell indicated to his colleagues of other municipalities at the time that focusing on crime was too one-sided, because the problems were more complex than that. Issues like housing, education and guidance also needed attention. It was also a time when Rita Verdonk was Minister of Integration and Bandell's vision that Antillean criminal youngsters needed help clashed with that of Verdonk, who was working on an arrangement to send these youngsters back to their islands. "Sending criminal youngsters back home was the same as exiling them. You just don't do that! We have done away with the institution

of exile. That was in the Middle Ages," Bandell said.

Equal rights

Bandell is a fierce supporter of equal rights for everyone in the Kingdom. "We are all Dutch. The Antilles is part of our Kingdom." Equal rights also means giving derailed youngsters a second chance if necessary, as well as improving the opportunities of these young people on the other side of the ocean. The mayor became interested in the islands because of his work. As head of Moluccan Affairs at the then-Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work CRM, he became involved in minorities when Moluccans "started to kidnap." "I wanted to know how it felt for these people to be living in the Netherlands."

His background knowledge about migrants came in handy when he became Mayor of Moordrecht, a town close to the city of Gouda, in 1977. He was confronted with a tense situation in the town of 6,000 people of whom some 25 per cent were foreigners, mainly Moluccans. He decided to tackle the problem from different sides – housing, education and employment – with positive results, because at the end of his term, 10 years later, employment among migrants in Moordrecht had gone up.

VNG

As Mayor of Moordrecht, and later as mayor of Papendrecht (1987-1995), Alkmaar (1995-2000) and finally Dordrecht (2000 to the present), Bandell was very active in the Association of Dutch Municipalities VNG. He was a member of various committees, has been chairman of VNG's platform of asylum seekers and integration since 1994, and chairman of the association's platform Netherlands Antilles and Aruba since 2004.

"I predicted that the large cities would be faced with the same integration problems that I had already faced as Mayor of Moordrecht. Unfortunately my predictions turned out to be true," he said. The Antillean islands and Aruba are members of VNG, but they don't make sufficient use of it, according to Bandell. "It was like sleeping with one ear on an alarm clock that didn't go off." So Bandell proposed intensifying contacts with the islands via VNG International. Together with VNG Director Ralph Pans,

Bandell visited all islands in 2004. With the assistance of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Kingdom Relations BZK, VNG International arranges internships, exchange of information and development of knowledge on municipal level together with the islands. The background thought is that the islands are "small" and The Hague "big." "VNG also belongs to the islands and VNG is a good lobby-machine. You have to know and be known. That is the basis for a successful cooperation," he said.

Dismantling

Dismantling the Netherlands Antilles is a necessary evil, in Bandell's opinion. "They have tried to make it work, but it doesn't. You have to stop something that doesn't work. The question arises, what to do with the islands." But "pouring out" legislation over the islands as the Dutch Government is doing is not the way to go, he said, warning against too much Dutch meddling.

Financial supervision and a government with more integrity are acceptable conditions. Citizens have a right to a proper and honest government, said



Bandell. But the Netherlands should take the small scale of the islands into account.

"If the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank would suddenly stand on my doorstep here in Dordrecht, I honestly wouldn't know what to do. Then how can you demand this of a small community and a government with limited resources?" Bandell promised that he wouldn't lose his love for the islands after his retirement. He is determined to visit the islands. "I promised my wife. I have become attached to the islands and I don't mind helping out in the future, but first I'm going to visit my grandchildren in California." □

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New head of finance tied to illegal construction issue in Netherlands

PHILIPSBURG--New “heavyweight” Interim Head of the Department of Finance Bastiaan “Bas” Roorda was involved in a legal dispute with the municipality of Valkenswaard near Eindhoven for the most part of 2009, over structures on his property constructed without the proper building permits.

The incident ignited a political firestorm for Roorda, whose VVD faction was accused of “vriendjespolitiek” (friendship politics) and unethical practices by political opponents.

Roorda illegally converted a horse stable into a home for his 79-year-old father in an area that was not zoned for such a structure and, in any case, without the necessary permits. Although defiant, arguing that the municipality had misinterpreted the laws pertaining to building permits and what he could or could not do on his property, Roorda eventually lost his year-long battle with the city council and was ordered to demolish the illegally built structures.

However, his political party handed him a “small victory,” when the VVD-controlled council allowed his father to remain in the remaining illegally constructed stables for the duration of his life, although the structures were not meant as living space.

The opposition Labour Party accused the council of maladministration and said the VVD had created unequal treatment of citizens. The Labour Party dubbed the development as “irresponsible, unfair, very strange and sad” and questioned Roorda’s and his party members’ integrity.

It has been reported in Eindhoven that the Roorda case and its fallout is the primary reason the VVD is not expected to win a seat in the March 2010 election.

Described as a “heavyweight” by Commissioner of Finance Xavier Blackman, Roorda, already working in St. Maarten, reportedly is still an active and prominent member of the VVD faction in Valkenswaard. At the time of the political upheaval concerning his home, he was the VVD faction leader there.

He reportedly is still on the VVD list as “lijst duwer” (the last position on the list) for the elections on March 3, 2010. This position on a party list usually means the candidate will not be seeking public office and usually moves on.

When contacted, Roorda told The Daily Herald he was phasing out that part of his life, considering his position in St. Maarten. He also said he still had to finalise certain personal matters (like the sale of his house) before the permanent move could be made. He declined to elaborate further.

Commissioner Blackman has been unavailable for comment on questions about the appointment of a politically active figure in the Netherlands as Head of the local Department of Finance. Leader of Government Commissioner William Marlin also was not available for comment.

The VVD party has been extremely vocal about financial reform on the islands and Second Chamber Permanent Committee for Antillean and Aruban Affairs Chairman

Willibrord van Beek is also a VVD member.

In announcing Roorda’s appointment, Blackman gave no details about the “heavyweight’s” compensation package. There was also no indication about whether the appointment was in any way linked to Dutch financial supervision.

Roorda had expressed significant interest in St. Eustatius and its development possibilities in the past. He wrote a master plan for the island and his efforts to persuade Valkenswaard to adopt Statia once the territory had been integrated into the Netherlands as part of the BES islands failed when his

proposal came up against heavy opposition.

Undeterred, Roorda has been active in events linked to Statia. He is also known to be interested in developing a marina in Statia and was quoted in the sailing publication All At Sea of January 2009 as saying: “In 2011, St. Eustatius will be part of the Netherlands again and we are hoping to develop a good marina and bring more attention and people to the island.”

Roorda is the director of his own company, Tall Tree Technology B.V., a consultancy firm that provides general financial expertise. He holds an MBA in Accounting from Institute van Ishoven

and has been the financial manager of several private companies in the Netherlands, including R&S Renewable Energy Systems (financial services industry) and Zetek Power Products (renewable and environment industry).

Commissioner Blackman told the press last week that Roorda was on contract with government and would serve for two to three years. During that time he will train a St. Maartener to take up the post at the end of his term, as a condition of his contract. Blackman described Roorda as a “heavyweight” who would lessen the double workload of Interim Director of Resources Hiro Shigemoto. □

Charter yacht show faces uncertain future, MYBA contract terminated

SIMPSON BAY--Mediterranean Yacht Brokers Association (MYBA) no longer will be owners of the St. Maarten Charter Yacht Show as of 2010, outgoing St. Maarten Marine Trades Association President Jeff Boyd confirmed on Monday.

Boyd said a settlement had been reached at the Genoa boat show earlier this year stipulating that as long as MYBA took responsibility to promote this year’s show to the best of its abilities, it would be released from its contract. Ownership of the show now comes back to St. Maarten.

He said it had been hoped MYBA’s three-year involvement with the show would enhance the event and the conflict about whether the show should be in St. Maarten or Antigua would be solved “but that had not happened.”

However, he said MYBA might still be involved in next year’s show, if there were one, but under a different format. The process of discussing the format of a new show will begin in St. Maarten in February.

MYBA Chair Fiona Maureso said that if there were a show next year MYBA would be there

in its capacity as charter brokers.

“It was a smaller show this year than what we expected, but a high quality one. In view of the economic climate it could have been a lot worse, so we are still happy,” she said. “We hope MYBA has left a legacy that can be taken into the future. There’s still a lot of potential for the show.”

She said MYBA was answerable to 170 professional industry members and therefore “cannot continue to lose money.”

MYBA President Neil Cheston concurred, telling Gary Brown’s Yacht Blast radio programme on Island 92 earlier that the association spending its members’ money to run the show. “If ultimately we cannot persuade our members, yacht owners and captains to come to this show and not Antigua, we lose,” he said “The show this year is not profitable because it’s not full.”

Boyd said he hoped there would be a show next year, but it would be up to the marine trade association board of directors, and to some degree the membership, to decide the value of the show to them and to the island. □

Bryant Gumbel says he has lung cancer

By DAVID BAUDER,
AP Television Writer

NEW YORK — Bryant Gumbel shocked a television audience with the news that he's recovering from lung cancer surgery and treatment.

The former "Today" show anchor, 61, said a malignant tumor and part of his lung were removed two months ago. He revealed his condition to Kelly Ripa while subbing for Regis Philbin on Tuesday's edition of "Live With Regis and Kelly." (Philbin recently had hip replacement surgery.) "It's nothing to hide from," Gumbel said. "They opened up my chest, they took out a

malignant tumor, they took out part of my lung and they took out some other goodies." Even with the surgery, some aggressive cancer cells had escaped, "so I went through some treatment and it's done now," he said.

Gumbel said he and his wife, Hilary Quinlan, had wanted to keep the news private. He said he had even kept his staff at the HBO sports newsmagazine "Real Sports" in the dark. HBO said Gumbel didn't miss an episode, taping shows on both Sept. 15 and Oct. 27.

"We hope," he said. "We HOPE, it's over."

Gumbel was host of "Today"

for 15 years, ending in 1997, as the show became a ratings juggernaut. He worked first with Jane Pauley, briefly with Deborah Norville, then with Katie Couric. He moved to CBS for a prime-time newsmagazine.

After that did poorly, he moved back to the mornings, hosting "The Early Show" from 1999-2002.

He's receded from the public eye since then, concentrating on "Real Sports," an Emmy-winning monthly magazine that takes a newsy look at sports issues.

Until he was called out by Ripa, there's some question

about whether Gumbel's health news would still be under wraps. At the opening of Tuesday's show, Ripa told Gumbel that "you just made me almost faint."

The two had been talking backstage and Ripa mentioned that she wanted to dance with him to accompany a segment with a woman who dances for exercise. Gumbel demurred, and when Ripa pushed it, he said he was not allowed to dance. Then he told her the reason, she said.

Gumbel said he's meeting with his surgeon and oncologist next week and hopes to be cleared to play golf. □



FILE—This Nov. 16, 2009 file photo shows Bryant Gumbel attending the premiere of 'The Road' in New York. Gumbel says he's recovering from lung cancer surgery and treatment. (AP Photo/Evan Agostini, File)

Vinyl's comeback makes musicians want to sing



Wilco's 2009 self-titled release is seen with a CD copy of the album along with the vinyl in Toronto December 3, 2009.

REUTERS/Terri Coles

By Terri Coles

TORONTO (Reuters) — As music lovers approach a new decade in this still-young century, a recording technology once considered old and obsolete -- vinyl -- has been making a strong comeback. Vinyl albums, which began to be replaced by CDs in the mid-1980s, have rebounded in recent years as enthusiasts young and old turned sentimental for the old pops, cracks and warm sounds emitting from grooves on a record.

And as sales have rebounded, music makers ranging from big acts like Jack White and the Flaming Lips to local bands in major cities have been cranking out vinyl and treating fans with added material like old-style liner notes or posters.

If bands can keep costs low, they may even be able to

make extra money in the financially-strapped music business where cheap digital downloads are replacing once-lucrative CD sales.

"It's hard to say how long it'll last, but even if you're 16-years-old, your parents probably have vinyl somewhere," said Wayne Coyne, lead singer of the Flaming Lips. "So there's probably some trigger of another time, an exotic world where this was the way you bought music."

While vinyl records never truly became extinct from record store shelves, the current resurgence seems to have picked up pace starting around 2007. Last year, 1.9 million vinyl records sold, roughly double 2007. Industry tracker Nielsen SoundScan projects that 2.8 million units will be purchased in 2009.

A wide range of bands, from

Radiohead and the Beatles to Bob Dylan and Metallica, have been shipping albums on vinyl. Radiohead, for instance, sold 61,000 vinyl records in 2008.

Turntable sales are increasing, too, suggesting vinyl is reaching new customers and not just collectors and purists.

SEEING IS BELIEVING

Vinyl's renaissance springs from both musicians and fans longing for something more tangible than just listening to music on a digital file, said Paul Simcoe, co-owner of Toronto's Criminal Records. "I'll support an artist to the end of time," he said. "But I still have a huge problem buying something I can't see."

The Flaming Lips' Coyne said vinyl appeals to fans' senses in ways digital downloads can't by providing colorful notes, posters or other visual items that downloads just don't have. In fact, his band has even packaged DVDs with vinyl albums.

Trevor Larocque, co-founder of Toronto's Paper Bag Records, said vinyl gives artists the chance to offer fans distinct products. His label's records are made in limited amounts of 200 or 300, and the record sleeves are silk-screened with exclusive artwork.

Another technique to lure online listeners is offering

memberships in fan clubs that include shipments of unreleased, vinyl recordings, which is what Nashville-based Third Man Records, founded by the White Stripes' Jack White, is doing.

"That, for us, is a really strong way of reaching out to a digital generation," said label executive Ben Swank.

In the case of Toronto-based band the Diablos, they released a new EP, "Old Story, Fresh Road," digitally and on vinyl, forgoing CDs which they felt were unnecessary. But releasing an album on vinyl presents musicians with challenges that don't exist for CDs or digital files, said David Read of Vinyl Record Guru, a manufacturing outfit on Vancouver Island, Canada.

COSTS VS. BENEFITS

Listeners can download files and/or copy digital songs onto CDs and DVDs from their home computer but vinyl presses aren't easy to find -- there are only a handful in North America. And to produce a vinyl album, first the lacquer on which to press each vinyl album must be made. Then, a test pressing needs to be done and sound problems must be fixed before mass quantities are produced. Also, many bands want to release just a few hundred copies on vinyl, yet custom vinyl jackets must be ordered in minimum quantities of 500. To get around that problem,

Paper Bag Records ships its albums in, aptly so, paper -- recycled cardboard jackets that are customized for each band.

Diablos drummer Mike Duffield said his band borrowed money to finance their vinyl EP, but it was worth it.

"When you've worked a year and a half on something and you want to see it done, you take risks," he explained. "I think you have to invest in yourself and your product." Vinyl records also cost fans more than CDs, said Criminal Record's Simcoe.

CDs generally range from \$10 to \$14, but a vinyl record is usually at least \$15. A price of \$20 is more normal and a double-disc, for instance, can cost upward of \$35.

Some major and independent labels have increased vinyl prices to account for higher costs and increased demand, but Simcoe worries that tactic may end the positive sales trend. "These guys are in danger of killing this industry," he said.

But for some artists, vinyl's downsides are worth working around. Third Man Records, for instance, sidesteps higher costs and inconvenience by doing all their work in Nashville. The music is recorded in a studio behind their storefront and records are pressed at a facility just down the road. □



Stock market slides as dollar strengthens



FILE - In this Jan. 30, 2009 file photo, a trader leans on a phone post on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Stocks fell sharply early Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009, as investors sought safe-haven assets like the dollar and Treasuries following signs that the global economy is still struggling.

By **SARA LEPRO**
and **TIM PARADIS**,
AP Business Writers

NEW YORK — Investors dumped stocks and sought safe-haven assets like the dollar and Treasuries on signs that the global economy is still struggling.

The Dow Jones industrial average lost 115 points in afternoon trading Tuesday but recovered some of its earlier losses.

A disappointing earnings forecast from Dow Jones industrials component 3M Co. and a weak sales report from McDonald's Corp., another Dow company, pulled stocks lower. The reports overshadowed an increased profit forecast from FedEx Corp. Reports in Britain and Germany signaled that manufacturing remains weak, while Japan's government approved \$81 billion in stimulus measures to keep its economy out of recession. Credit rating agencies warned about debt problems in Dubai and Greece.

Investors sent the dollar and Treasury prices higher in response to the day's news.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew, file)

Commodities fell as the dollar rose. A stronger dollar makes commodities more expensive for buyers overseas, and hurts profits at companies that have large international operations. After the huge rally in stocks and commodities this year, investors are looking for clues about where the economy is headed and how best to position their portfolios for next year. Investors are uncertain of how long the environment of low interest rates and a weak dollar that helped fuel the market's rally will last.

Philip S. Dow, managing director of equity strategy at RBC Wealth Management in Minneapolis, said 3M's forecast drew attention from FedEx and that the day's retreat is in order after the steep gains in stocks over all. "People were so enthused with FedEx then got a little disappointed with 3M," he said. "I just think it's a rest."

At the same time, there are still plenty of doubts about the economic recovery to drive cautious investors to pad their portfolios with safe havens. With the Standard

& Poor's 500 index up 63.1 percent since early March, many investors are looking to protect their gains.

Stocks came off their lows of the day as President Barack Obama proposed spending on infrastructure projects as well as increased tax cuts for small businesses.

The speech comes after the government's unemployment report Friday showed far fewer job losses in November than expected. However investors still have doubts about how strong a recovery will be with one in 10 Americans out of work. In midafternoon trading, the Dow fell 116.31, or 1.1 percent, to 10,273.80. The Dow fell as much as 140 points earlier.

The broader Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 11.35, or 1 percent, to 1,091.90, while the Nasdaq composite index fell 13.03, or 0.6 percent, to 2,176.58.

Stocks finished little changed on Monday after reassurance from Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke that interest rates will remain low to support a recovery failed to galvanize investors.

Shares of 3M fell after the consumer products maker predicted adjusted earnings of \$4.50 to \$4.55 per share for the full year. That's below a profit of \$4.57 per share forecast by analysts. The stock fell \$1.02, or 1.3 percent, to \$76.89.

McDonald's fell \$1.42, or 2.3 percent, to \$60.51 after the world's largest fast-food chain said monthly sales in the U.S. fell in November.

FedEx raised its earnings forecast for the November quarter late Monday. Shares of the package delivery company rose \$2.45, or 2.8 percent, to \$89.97. □



FILE - In this file photo taken April 20, 2009, a neon sign reminds patrons at a McDonald's restaurant of the 24 hour service in the Wrigleyville neighborhood of Chicago. McDonald's Corp., the world's largest fast-food chain, said Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009, that a key U.S. sales figure fell in November, only the fourth time the monthly measurement failed to rise in more than 6 1/2 years.

(AP Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast, File)

McDonald's sales take hit from US joblessness

By **ASHLEY M. HEHER**,
AP Retail Writer

CHICAGO — The supersized recession that was a boon for business last year caught up further with McDonald's Corp. in November, as high unemployment ate into sales.

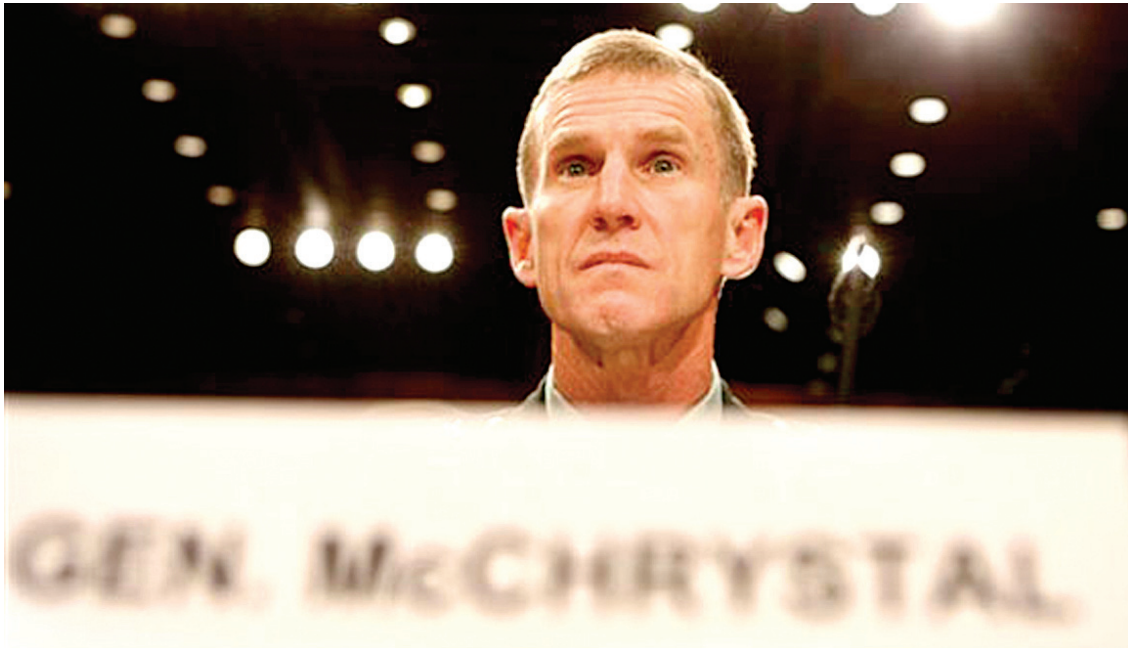
While the world's largest burger chain is still faring better than its competitors, who've increasingly been pushing value menus and discounts of their own, the restaurant's fortunes likely won't improve unless the U.S. economy does.

"I think ultimately, we'll need job growth to get things turned around to get back in the positive territory," said Morningstar restaurant analyst R.J. Hottovy.

On Tuesday, McDonald's said sales at restaurants open at least a year fell 0.6 percent in the U.S. It was the second consecutive monthly decline for the measure, an important indicator of a restaurant chain's health, and a steeper fall than October's 0.1 percent.

November's overseas results were better but still mixed, helped by a softening dollar that translated foreign revenue into more dollars. Around the globe, sales in locations open at least a year rose 0.7 percent.

Because of its size and its ability to trounce competitors with its increasingly popular dollar menu, McDonald's was one of the early beneficiaries of the recession as diners traded down from pricier restaurants. In fact, last November, sales in locations open a year climbed 4.5 percent in the U.S. and 7.7 globally. But earlier this fall, McDonald's cautioned it wasn't immune to the recession, either, and in October, the U.S. figure fell 0.1 percent. □



Gen. Stanley McChrystal, Commander of the International Security Assistance Force and Commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan, arrives to testify before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009.

Associated Press

Gen. McChrystal supports new strategy, drawdown

ANNE GEARAN
PAULINE JELINEK
Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. general in charge of the war in Afghanistan said Tuesday he expects to know by this time next year whether the new troop buildup is reversing Taliban momentum and he believes he will be able to draw down forces in 2011 without asking for more.

Gen. Stanley McChrystal, appearing before House and Senate panels a week after President Barack Obama announced his new surge-and-exit strategy, said he supports the plan without reservation. He would have preferred more forces that he is being given, and he said he

had not recommended the 18-month expiration date for the surge that Obama applied.

"I'm comfortable with the entire plan, sir," McChrystal told a skeptical Sen. Carl Levin, a Democrat and chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, who had voiced misgivings previously, also saluted the new approach.

The two men sat side by side at a pair of congressional hearings long sought by Republicans critical of the lengthy White House review that yielded the decision to send an emergency infusion of 30,000 additional U.S. forces.

Continued on Next Page

Big storm targets Midwest with deep snow, strong winds

By MELANIE S. WELTE
Associated Press Writer

DES MOINES, Iowa — Fierce winds ripped away the roof of a police station, thousands of people lost power and drivers stuck by closed highways settled in to wait as storms swept out of the West to the nation's midsection Tuesday.

Much of the Upper Midwest was covered in deep snow, and strong winds Tuesday night were expected to create blizzard conditions. The storm had already blanketed much of the mountain west and drenched Southern California with rain.

Continued on Page B5



Jim Bollman, owner of Go-Get-R Towing and Recovery, pulls a car out of a small creek off Pearl City Road in Freeport, Ill. Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009.

Associated Press

Obama offers plan to jolt U.S. economy



President Barack Obama speaks on the economy at the Brookings Institution in Washington, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009.

Associated Press

STEVEN R. HURST
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama set out fresh plans Tuesday to reinvigorate the U.S. economy, focusing on incentives to small businesses and hiring to bring down what he called the "staggering" 10 percent unemployment rate.

Continued on Page B4

Militants strike Baghdad govt targets, 127 dead

BRIAN MURPHY
Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD (AP) — A suicide car bomb flattened a court building and an explosives-rigged ambulance blew down walls like dominos near the Finance Ministry during a wave of coordinated attacks Tuesday that targeted high-profile symbols of Iraqi authority. At least 127 people were killed.

The blasts — at least five in total — marked the third major strike on government sites since August and brought uncomfortable questions for Iraqi leaders. These include signs al-Qaida in Iraq is regrouping and concerns over the readiness of Iraqi forces to handle security alone as U.S. forces depart.

The bombings also brought swift accusations about the motives behind the attacks. Officials claimed a Sunni insurgent alliance, including members of Saddam Hussein's banned Baath Party, seeks to undermine the pro-Western government ahead of elections set for March 7 and the later withdrawal of U.S. combat forces.

Authorities also faced angry questions about how bombers again found holes in Iraqi security.

"If security falls apart, then everything will collapse," said Abbas al-Bayati, head of parliament's defense committee and an ally of the Shiite government, as lawmakers convened an emergency session.

Another lawmaker, Saadi al-Barazani, shouted: "If I were the interior minister, I would resign!"

The attacks began with a suicide strike on a police patrol. An hour later, four more explosions rumbled across Baghdad in the span of a few minutes. Suicide car bombings hit three sites: the main Appeals Court, an area outside the Finance Ministry and a government compound that includes the Labor Ministry. A roadside bomb also went off near a university.

Continued on Page B6



Gen. Stanley McChrystal, Commander of the International Security Assistance Force and Commander of U.S. Forces Afghanistan, talks with U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl W. Eikenberry prior to testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009.

Associated Press

NEW STRATEGY

Continued from Page B1

Although they took pains to say they are friends, they displayed none of the hand-in-glove unity of the Gen. David Petraeus and U.S. ambassador Ryan Crocker, who managed the Iraq surge nearly three years ago.

Sen. John McCain, the senior Republican on the panel, pointedly told the men he

hopes that any differences they have are put to rest. He praised the decision to send additional U.S. forces but said the deadline to begin bringing them home is a mistake.

“We have announced a date divorced from conditions on the ground,” McCain said.

The new battle strategy includes a plan to begin bringing some troops home in 18 months. How many troops

leave would be determined by conditions on the ground at that time.

“Results may come more quickly,” McChrystal told lawmakers. “But the sober fact is that there are no silver bullets. Ultimate success will be the cumulative effect of sustained pressure.”

Eikenberry said the course outlined last week by Obama “offers the best path to stabilize Afghanistan and to ensure al-Qaida and other terrorist groups cannot regain a foothold to plan new attacks against our country or our allies.” Rep. Ike Skelton, a Democrat and chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said Obama did the right thing by ordering an additional 30,000 U.S. troops. But he opened the hearing by ticking off a series of questions, asking what success will look like, how it will be measured, “what risk are we accepting in the next 18 months and how can we mitigate it?”

McChrystal assured Skelton that the troop infusion will

work. “I believe we will absolutely be successful,” the general said.

The House panel’s highest-ranking Republican, Rep. Howard “Buck” McKeon, told McChrystal he was waiting to hear how “the president is not under-resourcing his own strategy,” since the general has sketched ways that as many as 80,000 additional U.S. forces could have helped turn the tide. Under questioning later from McKeon, McChrystal said he did not think he would need to ask for any more troops in a year’s time, but would not hesitate to recommend more if circumstances change.

He also told McKeon he did not recommend the July 2011 exit plan, but that he supports it. He said he made no recommendations at all about the exit plan.

“By the summer of 2011, it will be clear to the Afghan people that the insurgency will not win, giving them the chance to side with their government,” McChrystal said. “From that point forward, while we

begin to reduce U.S. combat force, levels, we will remain partnered with the Afghan security forces in a supporting role to consolidate and solidify their gains.”

Eikenberry sought to clarify his stance during the three-month review, widely-reported as a hesitancy to support more troops at a time when there were still so many questions surrounding the corruption and mismanagement that have stained the Karzai administration.

“It was not a question of additional troops,” he said Tuesday. “It was a question of the number of troops ... the timelines... the context that those troops would operate in.”

Asked what his biggest challenges will be, McChrystal said growing the Afghan security forces in size and quality, bolstering the quality of Afghan government and convincing the Afghan people to support their government even as they are being “coerced by the Taliban.” □



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Ohio executes inmate with 1-drug lethal injection

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Associated Press Writer

LUCASVILLE, Ohio (AP) — Ohio executed a killer Tuesday by performing the nation's first lethal injection using a single drug, a supposedly less painful method than previous executions that required three drugs.

Kenneth Biros was pronounced dead at 11:47 a.m. Tuesday, about 10 minutes after one dose of thiopental sodium began flowing into his veins at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility in Lucasville. The U.S. Supreme Court had rejected his final appeal about two hours before.

Experts predicted the thiopental sodium would take longer to kill the 51-year-old Biros than the convention three-drug cocktail, but the 10 minutes it apparently took him to die was about the usual length of time even under the method previously used by Ohio and still used by most other death penalty states.

The mother, sister and brother of Biros' victim, Tami Engstrom, applauded as the warden announced the time of death.

"Rock on," Debi Heiss, Tami's sister, said a moment earlier as the curtains were drawn for the coroner to check on Biros. "That was too easy."

The execution team tried for several minutes to find usable veins, including inserting needles several times in both arms, before eventually completing the process on just his left arm after about 30 minutes.

After the chemical started flowing, Biros' chest heaved up and down several times, and he moved his head a couple of times over about two minutes before his body stopped moving.

Prisons director Terry

Collins said the team took as much time as needed and he considered the process problem-free.

Ohio overhauled its procedure after a failed attempt to execute Romell Broom, a procedure halted by Gov. Ted Strickland in September. Executioners tried for two hours to find a suitable vein for injection, hitting bone and muscle in as many as 18 needle sticks that Broom, 53, said were very painful.

A hearing begins in federal court Wednesday on Broom's attempt to stop the state from trying again.

The state had two goals in changing its process. Switching to one drug was meant to end a 5-year-old lawsuit that claims Ohio's three-drug system was capable of causing severe pain. Injection experts and defense attorneys agreed a single dose of sodium thiopental would not cause pain.

A backup procedure allowing a two-drug muscle injection was created in case a situation like Broom's execution happened again.

States are watching Ohio's change, but none have made a similar switch. Florida, Kentucky, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia are among those saying they will keep the three-drug method.

It was the second trip to Lucasville for Biros, who spent more than 30 hours in the holding cell in March 2007 before the U.S. Supreme Court stopped his execution and allowed him to make his own challenge to the three-drug method.

U.S. District Judge Gregory Frost refused Monday to delay the execution, and Biros' appeal was rejected later that night.

All 36 death penalty states use lethal injection, and 35 rely on the three-drug method.

Nebraska, which recently adopted injection over electrocution, has proposed the three-drug method but hasn't finalized the process.

Biros killed the 22-year-old Engstrom near Warren in 1991 after offering to drive her home from a bar, then scattered her body parts in



In this Jan. 8, 2007, Debbi Heiss, left, looks at former Brookfield Township police detective Rocky Fonce, as Fonce talks about the killing of 1991 killing of Heiss's sister Tami Engstrom in Warren, Ohio.

Associated Press

Ohio and Pennsylvania. Before dying Tuesday, he apologized for his crime and thanked his friends and relatives for supporting him.

"I'm being paroled to my father in heaven," Biros said. "I will now spend all of my holidays with my Lord and savior, Jesus Christ." □



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President Barack Obama speaks on the economy at the Brookings Institution in Washington, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009.

OBAMA PLAN

Continued from Page B1

Obama said he wants to push money left over from a financial rescue plan — the Troubled Asset Relief Program — toward the small business community for investment and hiring. He said additional funds also would be sought from other sources for

infrastructure improvements and rebates to consumers who make their homes more energy efficient.

Obama has stepped up attention on America's high unemployment rate after spending much of the last few months focused mostly on health care and the war in Afghanistan. The state of the

economy - and the jobless rate in particular - could be the key issue in determining whether Democrats preserve their majorities in both chambers of Congress in next November's midterm elections.

Obama hopes his revamped plan will dramatically improve the fortunes of millions of U.S. families that have lost not only jobs, but also huge portions of retirement savings and, in many cases, seen their homes taken over in mortgage foreclosures.

"Our work is far from done. For even though we have reduced the deluge of job losses to a relative trickle, we are not yet creating jobs at a

pace to help all those families who have been swept up in the flood," the president said. "There are more than seven million fewer Americans with jobs today than when this recession began. That's a staggering figure..."

The U.S. economy appears to be on the mend after the deepest downturn since at least World War II, but unemployment — which was slightly improved in November but still standing at 10 percent — and scarce credit for small businesses have left the electorate in a sour mood. That could magnify the historic tendency of U.S. voters to cast their ballot against members of Congress of the president's party in the first national balloting after a change in the White House.

And, hoping to blunt the political fears of fellow Democrats and the deep economic anxiety of the U.S. public, Obama sounded a call to optimism that harkened back to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's leadership during the Great Depression:

"These have been a tough two years.

And there will no doubt be difficult months ahead," Obama said. "But the storms of the past are receding. The skies are brightening. And the horizon is beckoning once more."

And looking toward next year's vote, Obama recounted the history of what his administration has done to prevent a repeat of the

decade-long depression of the 1930s, pointedly criticizing Republicans for taking the nation into its worst economic downturn since World War II. "We were forced to take those steps largely without the help of an opposition party which, unfortunately, after having presided over the decision-making that led to the crisis, decided to hand it over to others to solve," he said.

Obama noted that that new accounting showed the unpopular \$700 billion TARP program, designed to bailout the American financial sector would end up costing the government \$200 billion less than anticipated. That money, he said, should be poured not only into reducing the national deficit but for giving small businesses the incentives to invest and restart hiring.

The Republican opposition in Congress has said the money should all go for deficit reduction.

Obamadidnotoutlinespecifics, but senior administration officials part of the president's package would alter tax accounting temporarily to allow small business to report investments of up to \$250,000 as an expense, thus reducing reported income and taxes on the profits.

Obama also proposed elimination of fees on government-originated loans to small businesses coupled with federal guarantees of those loans through the end of next year.

On infrastructure measures focused on pushing money still not spent in the separate \$787 billion Recovery Act into projects more quickly. The clean energy component would be designed to set up a rebate system akin the highly popular cash-for-clunkers program to encourage homeowners to invest in energy efficiency.

With the tough election year coming up, Obama and congressional Democrats are trying to turn the highly unpopular TARP financial rescue program into one that creates new jobs has strong political appeal. Republican critics have depicted such an approach as a backdoor way of enacting a second economic stimulus package. □

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BIG STORM

Continued from Page B1

Ice was the problem Tuesday morning in Oklahoma, where Interstate 40 was closed for about 25 miles between Clinton and Elk City. Mitch Dodson, a trucker hauling soda pop out of Durango, Colo., to Virginia, was waylaid at the Travel America plaza near the town of Sayre in western Oklahoma.

"It's just a sheet of ice from Amarillo to here," Dodson said. "It's a disaster."

With travel likely to get worse, officials were warning residents in parts of the west and Midwest to stay close to home. Blizzard warnings were issued for most of Iowa as well as eastern Nebraska, southern Minnesota and southern Wisconsin.

Some schools closed before the worst of the storm was expected to hit so that school buses wouldn't slip on slick roads.

"Anybody traveling tomorrow morning is really taking a huge risk I would say — a risk of being stranded and not having anybody be able to help you for 6 or 12 hours, probably," Karl Jungbluth, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Johnston, Iowa, said Tuesday.

Jungbluth said a "classic, big, deepening winter storm" was affecting more than a dozen states. A foot or more of snow was expected in parts of Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin. Wind gusts of up to 50 mph could create snow drifts of 8 to 15 feet.

"Snow and lots of it!" said Rose Jansen, assistant manager at Sparky's One Stop gas station in Schaller, Iowa. "We'll be here, no matter what."

Subzero temperatures caused a scene out of the movie "A Christmas Story," when a boy got his tongue stuck to a metal fence pole. Firefighters in Boise, Idaho, used a glass of warm water to free the boy, who they estimated was about 10 years old. Fire Capt. Bill Tinsley says the boy's tongue was bleeding a little, but he was allowed to continue walking to school.

The weather also brought a film-like feeling for Sharmishtha Jindal, an 18-year-old University of Iowa freshman from Bhopal, India.

"I saw this in the movies and on television, but this is the first experience," Jindal said. "It's very different in the real world."

Heavy rain pounded some parts of the South. More than 4 inches were reported in spots

in New Orleans, and flooded traffic slowed morning commutes. The storm also produced high winds and a possible tornado near Lake Pontchartrain, the National Weather Service said.

In Buffalo, N.Y., meteorologists expect the storm to dump 3 or more feet of snow between Wednesday and Saturday in the mainly rural snow belts east of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. They also urged residents to deflate blow-up Santas, warning that wind gusts near 60 mph could sweep away all but the most securely attached holiday decorations.

The storm had hit much of the West on Monday, bringing subzero wind chills in Washington state and heavy snow that closed schools and government offices in Reno, Nev. In the Phoenix area, fierce wind brought down power lines, left four hospitals temporarily without power and created wide outages. Freezing temperatures in Oregon were suspected in one death.

Big rigs were left jackknifed across highways in several states.

And more snow was coming: The National Weather Service said the upper elevations of the Sierra mountains could get up to 3 feet, with up to 4 feet forecast for the mountains of southern Utah.

Two people were killed in traffic accidents blamed on slick conditions in New Mexico. Winds of up to 100 mph were reported on St. Augustin pass between Las Cruces and White Sands Missile Range, and the powerful gusts ripped away the roof of the White Sands Missile Range's police station.

Officials in northern Arizona closed stretches of Interstate 17 and I-40 for part of the day, saying some areas were snow-packed and visibility levels were near zero. The storm dumped more than 20 inches of snow over Flagstaff, more than four times the record of 5 inches set in 1956.

Cold temperatures also were threatening California crops. The chilly weather hit with only about 10 percent to 15 percent of the navel and mandarin orange crops harvested, said Bob Blakely, director of industrial relations for the California Citrus Mutual.

"We've got a lot on the line," said Blakely. "Both of them combined you're probably looking at over a billion dollars in fruit hanging out there on the trees." □



A woman looks to cross a snow covered downtown intersection, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009, in Des Moines, Iowa. A fierce winter storm was moving into the nation's midsection Tuesday, promising to wallop the region with heavy snow and strong winds.

Associated Press

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Smoke rises over a court complex in Baghdad in this image taken from TV Tuesday Dec. 8, 2009. An official at Iraq's Interior Ministry said scores of people have been killed in a series of coordinated blasts around Baghdad. Three bomb-rigged cars exploded in quick succession on Tuesday, striking the Labor Ministry, a court complex and the new site of Iraq's Finance Ministry, whose previous building was destroyed in an August blast.

COORDINATED BLASTS *Associated Press*
Continued from Page B1 Iraq's Health Ministry reported at least 513 people

were wounded. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. However, multiple bombings are a hallmark of al-Qaida. The past two major strikes on Iraqi government sites were coordinated blasts in August and October that took more than 255 lives. Sunni groups linked to al-Qaida eventually issued statements saying they carried out the attacks.

Iraq's government, however, has tried to cast blame on Saddam loyalists — even parading three suspects on national television who gave what officials termed confessions for the October attacks.

No independent evidence has emerged to support a possible resurgence of the militant Baath Party cells. Instead, the government allegations are seen as attempts to deflect suspicions that al-Qaida and its insurgent allies could be regrouping before the March elections and the withdrawal of U.S. combat forces at the end of August.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's government has pointed to the sharp drop in overall violence around Iraq as one of its main achievements going into the elections. Any hints of instability could cost them at the polls.

Just hours after the bombings, the government set March 7 as the date for parliamentary elections. The voting was delayed by nearly seven weeks because of bickering over election rules. The postponement — coupled with any upsurge in violence — could complicate the Pentagon's pullout timetable as pressure builds to shift troops and equipment to Afghanistan.

Al-Maliki drew a direct connection between the attacks and the political compromises that cleared the way for elections.

"The timing of the cowardly terrorist attacks ... shows that the enemies of Iraq aim to create chaos in the country and foil the political process and the elections," said a statement from the U.S.-backed prime minister.

Iraq's military spokesman, Maj. Gen. Qassim al-Moussawi, blamed the "same hands" the government claims were behind the August and October attacks: Baath loyalists and al-Qaida-linked extremists.

In Washington, White House press secretary

Robert Gibbs condemned the attacks, saying Iraqi leaders who passed an elections law this week were moving the country in the right direction and "there are clearly those who are threatened by that."

In a joint statement, U.S. Ambassador Christopher Hill and Gen. Raymond Odierno, the top commander in Iraq, pledged to assist the Iraqi government "to bring to justice those individuals or groups for such murder."

Other statements decrying the attacks poured in from around the world.

One stood out: Neighboring Syria said it "strongly condemns the terrorist bombings."

Iraq's relations with Syria have soured recently after accusations by Baghdad that the Damascus government harbors Baath Party exiles who have masterminded and waged attacks in Iraq.

The bombings marked the most serious spate of violence in Baghdad since twin car bombs on Oct. 25 struck outside Baghdad administration offices, killing at least 155. In August, four suicide truck bombers hit the finance and foreign ministries, killing more than 100.

On a Web site known to express militant views, messages exchanged congratulations for the attacks and praised insurgents linked to al-Qaida in Iraq — with no mention of Baath Party alliances.

The first attack came at midmorning in southern Baghdad. A suicide car bomber struck a police patrol in the mostly Sunni district of Dora. At least three policemen and 12 civilians were killed, said a police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to media.

About an hour later, four blasts roared through different parts of Baghdad in less than 10 minutes, bringing the overall death toll to at least 127, according to police and hospital officials.

"What crime have we committed? Children and women were buried under debris. Why did they (Iraqi troops) let this car bomb pass?" cried Ahmed Jabbar as he staggered through the debris near the new Finance Ministry building alongside the Tigris River — an area where all cars pass through checkpoints manned by Iraqi forces. □

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Report: Brazil police killed more than 11,000

BRADLEY BROOKS

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)

— Police in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo have killed more than 11,000 people in the past six years, many execution-style, according to a report released Tuesday by Human Rights Watch.

Few of the officers have been charged in the extrajudicial killings, which are often labeled in police reports as the deaths of suspects who resisted arrest, the report said.

The 122-page declaration echoes a 2008 United Nations' finding that police throughout Brazil were responsible for a "significant portion" of 48,000 slayings the year before.

"Extrajudicial killing of criminal suspects is not the answer to violent crime," said Jose Miguel Vivanco, Americas director at Human Rights Watch. "The residents of Rio and Sao Paulo need more effective policing, not more violence from the police."

Isabel Figueiredo, Brazil's coordinator-general of human rights and public safety, acknowledged that police violence is a

widespread problem and "it concerns the federal government a great deal."

Figueiredo said authorities have launched a series of initiatives to confront the problem, including training police to respect human rights and the appropriate use of force, in addition to the purchase of less-lethal weapons for state police forces.

Security forces "have begun to understand that instead of solving the problem, confronting criminals with weapons leads to casualties on both sides," she said.

Officials from the Rio and Sao Paulo police departments did not comment.

But Rio state Public Safety Director Jose Beltrame, in charge of the city's armed security forces, previously took issue with the 2008 U.N. report, saying critics don't recognize that his officers must constantly confront drug gangs who rule over slums and are armed with military rifles, grenades and anti-aircraft weapons.

"We have to deal with something few others face:

armed combat with drug traffickers who are equipped with heavy weapons coming from abroad," Beltrame said in an October interview with The Associated Press. "That is a unique attribute our police deal with."

He spoke after Rio gangs had unleashed a wave of violence in which they downed a police helicopter, killing three of the six officers aboard — just a mile (two kilometers) from the Maracana stadium, where the 2016 Olympics' opening and closing ceremonies and the 2014 World Cup final will be held.

The Human Rights Watch report examined 51 cases in Rio and Sao Paulo in which it seemed that police had killed an alleged criminal, but then reported the victim died while resisting arrest.

In 33 cases, forensic evidence "was at odds with the official version of what took place" — including 17 cases in which autopsies indicated police shot the person at point-blank range, the report said, adding that "the 51 cases do not represent the totality of potential extrajudicial



Police aim their weapons during an operation against drug traffickers in the Pavao-Pavaozinho shantytown in the Copacabana neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro, Monday, Nov. 30, 2009.

Associated Press

killings, but are indicative of a much broader problem." Using government statistics, the report noted that police have killed more than 11,000 people in Sao Paulo and Rio since 2003. In Rio, the killings reached a high of 1,330 in 2007.

The report also states that Rio police killed one of every 23 people arrested, and Sao Paulo police one

of every 348 in 2008. In comparison, police in the U.S. killed one of every 37,000 people arrested that year. The report recommends creating specialized units within state prosecutors' offices to investigate "resistance" killings and ensure that officers responsible for extrajudicial executions are brought to justice. □



Aruba TODAY

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FBI takes terror probe to India and Pakistan

KIM GAMEL

Associated Press Writer

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The FBI is sending a team to Pakistan and India as part of an inquiry into a Chicago man accused of plotting against a Danish newspaper and sizing up targets ahead of last year's

deadly terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India's financial capital.

Pakistan's role in alleged plots spanning three countries has increasingly come under scrutiny as new details emerge about the case and suspect David Coleman Headley's

links to the country.

Headley, 49, an American of Pakistani descent, and Chicago businessman Tahawwur Rana, 48, a Pakistani-born Canadian national, were charged in October with conspiring to attack the Jyllands Posten newspaper in Denmark. The

newspaper had published 12 cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad in 2005 that set off protests in parts of the Muslim world.

The U.S. charges also said Headley, who had changed his name from Daood Gilani, had attended militant training

camps in Pakistan and conspired with members of the Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba to conduct extensive surveillance on potential targets in the Indian city of Mumbai before the terrorist attacks there in November 2008 that left 166 people dead.

The U.S. allegations offer a vivid illustration of Pakistan's militant problem as the Washington presses Islamabad to do more to stop it from spilling over the border into Afghanistan.

Headley was born in Washington as Daood Gilani to a Pakistani father and American mother who later moved to Pakistan where he spent his early years.

He met Rana when they were both teenagers at the Hasan Abdal Cadet College, a prestigious Pakistani boarding school with red brick buildings and manicured grounds outside the capital, Islamabad. They both entered in 1974, but only Rana completed the five-year term. Administrators say Headley left after three years to go live with his mother, who had returned to the United States after divorcing his father. The two maintained contact with graduates of the academy via e-mail as part of an alumni group.

Headley's half-brother, Danyal Gilani, said the family had little contact with Headley after he left for the U.S.

The half-brother, who is a public relations officer for the prime minister, said he last saw Headley when he visited Pakistan a few days after their father died last December.

The U.S. charges indicate Headley apparently was in Pakistan as late as January to contact Ilyas Kashmiri, who has been linked to al-Qaida and described as a leader of the terrorist group Harakat-ul Jihad Islami.

Headley could be sentenced to death if convicted on the charges involving the terrorist attacks in Mumbai. Headley's attorney, John T. Theis, said he would "continue to look at this and see what the evidence is," but declined to comment further. □



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Toys for Tots will also accept donations of non-perishable food items, and the good elves at Caribbean Speed Printers N.V. will make grocery bags to be distributed to families in need, especially those affected by the recently floods.

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McCoy, Tebow among five Heisman finalists

RALPH D. RUSSO

AP College Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Tim Tebow and Colt McCoy are headed back to the Heisman Trophy presentation as finalists, along with running backs Mark Ingram and Toby Gerhart and defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh.

The five finalists were announced Monday. The Heisman Trophy will be awarded Saturday in Manhattan.

The last time as many as five players were invited to the ceremony was 2004, when USC quarterback Matt Leinart won the award.

Tebow is trying to become the second two-time Heisman winner. The Florida quarterback won the award for college football's top player in 2007 and finished third last season.

McCoy was the runner-up last season to Oklahoma's Sam Bradford and has led No. 2 Texas to the BCS national championship game this season.

Ingram has rushed for 1,542 yards and scored 15 touchdowns for No. 1 Alabama.

Stanford's Gerhart, meanwhile, has run for more yards (1,736) than any player in the nation.

And Nebraska's Suh had 4½ sacks in an attention-grabbing performance against Texas in the Big 12 title game.

Tebow and McCoy entered this season as heavy favorites to contend for the Heisman Trophy again, but neither has played as well as last year and neither will go into Saturday's presentation as the clear favorite.

Still, just by being one of the five finalists, Tebow makes Heisman history and joins some elite company.

The first player to win the Heisman as a sophomore, Tebow now becomes the first player to be invited to the presentation ceremony three times since it began being televised in 1981.

He's also the first player — and sixth overall — to finish in the top five of the Heisman balloting three times since Herschel Walker did it in the early 1980s.

Tebow returned for his senior season to try and lead the Gators to a third national title in four seasons, but he won't reach that goal. After being No. 1 almost all season, Florida lost to Alabama 32-13 in the Southeastern Conference title game on Saturday and was knocked out of the national championship race.

The loss likely damaged Tebow's chances at a second Heisman, too. He has passed for 2,413 yards and rushed for 859 yards, but he hasn't been quite as productive as he was the past two seasons.

Like Tebow, McCoy also returned for his senior season to make a championship run. He has Texas a victory away from its first national title since 2005, but his numbers also have fallen off this season.

McCoy has passed for 3,512 yards with 27 touchdowns and 12 interceptions. He also nearly threw away the Longhorns' national championship hopes on the second-to-last play of the Nebraska game, coming within a second of letting the clock run out before the Longhorns could attempt the winning field goal.

UniTexas quarterback Colt McCoy, left, stands with Florida quarterback Tim Tebow during the annual National Football Foundation's College Football Hall of Fame awards dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York, Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2009. Both are Heisman Trophy finalists.

Associated Press



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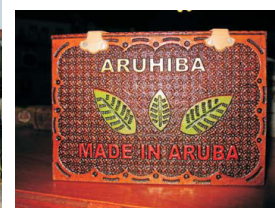
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ORANJESTAD- Benjamin Petrocchi started the newest export product of Aruba, locally produced cigars called "Aruhira". These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba.



Petrocchi has always had an interest in the cigar business and has also sold Premium Cuban Cigars, and now he is growing his own tobacco crop. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba he started his own production and cultivation of Aruhira Cigars in Aruba. The process took ten years. Petrocchi dedication to the cigars is important for the molding and process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. The cigar box is specially designed for the cigars with the logo "Aruhira".

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NBA Roundup

Nuggets spoil Al's return to Philly with 93-83 win

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Chauncey Billups scored 31 points and Carmelo Anthony had 14 to help the Denver Nuggets spoil Allen Iverson's return to Philadelphia with a 93-83 win over the 76ers on Monday.

The Nuggets went on a 22-3 run over the third and fourth quarters to rally for their fourth straight win.

Iverson's rousing return did little to mask the fact that the Sixers are a lousy team. They've lost 10 straight, and only one-win New Jersey has a worse record in the Eastern Conference.

Iverson received a standing ovation when he left in the fourth quarter. He scored 11

points on 4-for-11 shooting and had six assists.

Iverson bowed and kissed the logo at midcourt when he was introduced as the sellout crowd of 20,664 roared.

Knicks 93, Trail Blazers 84

At New York, Larry Hughes scored 21 points and David Lee had 17 points and 10 rebounds as New York won its season-high third straight.

Danilo Gallinari and Wilson Chandler each added 14 points as the Knicks won for the fourth time in five games.

Brandon Roy scored 27 points, and LaMarcus Aldridge had 19 points and 13 rebounds for the injury-depleted Trail Blazers, who lost center Greg Oden to season-ending surgery



Philadelphia 76ers' Allen Iverson hangs onto the ball after crashing into photographers while chasing a loose ball in the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Denver Nuggets, Monday, Dec. 7, 2009, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

IRL's Danica Patrick signs for minor NASCAR races

ANDREW BAGNATO

AP Sports Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — Indy Racing League star Danica Patrick signed with JR Motorsports on Tuesday to give NASCAR a try, but her schedule in the second-tier Nationwide Series has yet to be determined.

Patrick will make her stock car racing debut in the Feb. 6 ARCA race at Daytona International Speedway.

The IndyCar Series sensation unveiled her green and orange No. 7 Chevrolet in a news conference at Chase Field with GoDaddy.com, which is sponsoring her in both series.

"We've all been working very hard for some time now to bring this all together," Patrick said. "There's much relief there, but I'm starting to get a little bit nervous that now it's time to do my part of the deal and get out there in these cars and perform. It's no doubt going to be challenging."

Patrick will juggle her new NASCAR job with her full-time job in IndyCar, where she's the series' most marketable driver in the United States. She finalized a three-year contract extension last week with Andretti Autosport to run the full IndyCar schedule, but there's enough down time in the schedule to do both.

She will drive for the team owned by Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Rick Hendrick in the second-tier Nationwide Series.

"I think (NASCAR) is something we're going to try to do before and after the IndyCar season, but we will look at some options," she said.

It's not yet determined how many NASCAR races she will run in 2010. With flashbulbs popping, the black-clad Patrick posed between her NASCAR and IndyCar rides.

Patrick said she's more comfortable with the demands of a heavier schedule — something that she said she wasn't ready to do a few years ago, when speculation began to grow that she was considering racing stock cars.

"I'm finally ready," Patrick said. "I think that the schedule doesn't intimidate me as much as it used to. It's going to be a lot to learn."

Kelley Earnhardt, sister of JR Motorsports co-owner Dale Earnhardt Jr., worked to bring Patrick into the fold. Asked about



This is a Sept. 18, 2009, file photo showing Danica Patrick in the pits during a qualifying session, ahead of the IndyCar Series' Indy Japan 300 auto race in Motegi, Japan.

Associated Press

the team's expectations of Patrick, Earnhardt said, "I think it's reasonable for her to be in the top 15 of the series when she's running."

Patrick said she could "barely remember" the last time she was in a stock car and thought it was seven or eight years ago. But she said she's willing to learn a "new craft" and hopes to challenge the top names in NASCAR's Sprint Cup some day.

"Obviously, if ever one day it continued on and I ended up running in the Cup, then I need to learn how to race against those guys and earn their respect," Patrick said. "So I'm excited about that, actually. It's an opportunity to try and show what I've got." □

Sunday.

Thunder 104, Warriors 88

At Oklahoma, City, Kevin Durant scored 28 points and rookie James Harden added a career-high 26 as Oklahoma City capitalized on the ejection of Golden State's Corey Maggette.

The Thunder led by one when Maggette drew two technical fouls for arguing with official Derek Richardson late in the third quarter. Between Maggette's ejection and the end of the third quarter, the Thunder outscored Golden State 16-5.

Monta Ellis led the Warriors with 31 points but committed nine turnovers.

Jazz 104, Spurs 101

At Salt Lake City, Deron Williams recovered after missing his first six shots and scored 17 points for Utah, including a go-ahead jump shot with 22 seconds left.

Williams added 11 assists and Carlos Boozer had 27 points, seven rebounds and five assists for the Jazz, who guaranteed their first series win over the Spurs in 12 years with their third win over San Antonio this season.

Matt Bonner scored a career-high 28 for the Spurs.

In other NBA games it was: Denver 93, Philadelphia 83; New York 93, Portland 84; Oklahoma City 104, Golden State 88; and Utah 104, San Antonio 101. □

NHL Roundup

Brodeur ties Sawchuk with 103rd career shutout

BUFFALO, New York (AP) — Martin Brodeur tied Terry Sawchuk's NHL record with his 103rd shutout to lead the New Jersey Devils to a 3-0 victory over the Buffalo Sabres in the NHL on Monday.

Brodeur was rarely tested in making 22 saves to tie Sawchuk, who played from 1949-70. It was Brodeur's second shutout of the season after he blanked Carolina on Oct. 17.

Brodeur earned his league-leading 18th victory of the season. He preserved the shutout with a lightning-quick glove stop on Buffalo defenseman Steve Montador's wrist shot from the slot 5 minutes into the third period. Brian Rolston, Travis Zajac and Niclas Bergfors scored for New Jersey.

Capitals 3, Lightning 0

At Tampa, Florida, Alex Ovechkin scored two goals in his return from a two-game suspension as Washington beat the Lightning for the 12th consecutive time.

Ovechkin was suspended by the NHL following a kneeing penalty during a Nov. 30 game with Carolina. Both of his goals came during the Capitals' three-goal second. Eric Fehr also scored for Capitals. Tampa Bay has lost five of six.

At Toronto, Vesa Toskala made 22 saves in his first start since Nov. 23 and Alexei Ponikarovsky scored goals 28 seconds apart for the Toronto. Lee Stempniak, Matt Stajan and Mikhail Grabovski also had goals for the Maple Leafs. It was the first time Toronto won a weekday game at home this season and it came against one of the NHL's best road teams.

Bryan Little and Marty Reasoner scored for Atlanta.

At Montreal, Mike Cammalleri notched his team-leading 16th goal after Andrei Kostitsyn scored on Montreal's third shot of the game in the second period.

In other NHL games it was, Toronto 5, Atlanta 2;

New Jersey 3, Buffalo 0; Edmonton 3, Florida 2, SO; Montreal 3, Philadelphia 1; Washington 3, Tampa Bay 0; Carolina 3, Pittsburgh 2; Colorado 4, St. Louis 0; Phoenix 2, Minnesota 0; Los Angeles 2, Calgary 1. □

New Jersey Devils goalie Martin Brodeur stops a shot during the third period of the NHL hockey game against the Buffalo Sabres in Buffalo, N.Y., Monday, Dec. 7, 2009. The Devils won 3-0.

Associated Press



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Jamaica's Asafa Powell says Bolt can be beat



Jamaican sprinter Asafa Powell answer questions during a dialogue session at the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) Learning Center on Tuesday Dec. 8, 2009, in Singapore. Together with Dexter Lee and Veronica Campbell-Brown, the Jamaican athletes are in Singapore to participate in the Friends@YOG Program. Singapore will host the 2010 Youth Olympic Games from Aug. 14, to 26, 2010.

Associated Press

ALEX KENNEDY

Associated Press Writer

SINGAPORE (AP) — Jamaican sprinter Asafa Powell says he can catch countryman and world's fastest man Usain Bolt when the two face off next year. "Usain is the target right now and I'm shooting at him,"

Powell told reporters Tuesday in Singapore while promoting next year's Youth Olympic Games. "I know that I can do it."

Powell, who has run a personal best of 9.72 seconds in the 100 meters, will square off against Bolt and American Tyson Gay in the IAAF Diamond League, a new circuit for the top-tier of track and field starting in 2010, a year with no Olympics or World Championships on the schedule.

Bolt, the 100-meter and 200-meter world record holder and a three-time Olympic champion, ran a record 9.58 seconds at Berlin in August, a mark Powell said can be beat. "I knew 9.5 was possible," he said. "I'm not sure if 9.4 is possible, but I'm 100 percent sure that you'll see some very fast times next year."

Gay ran a 9.69 at Shanghai in September.

Powell said the 6-foot 5 Bolt has an edge over smaller competitors during the second half of races, but is slower at the start.

"I have an advantage because I'm shorter than him so I can get out of the starting block faster, while he's taller so he's stronger at the end," Powell said. □

Brazil arrests 6 suspects in \$6M tunnel heist

ALAN CLENDENNING

Associated Press Writer

SAO PAULO (AP) — Authorities arrested five men and one woman accused of tunneling their way to nearly \$6 million over the weekend while Brazil was gripped with football fever, but detectives recovered only a tiny fraction of the stolen cash, police said Tuesday.

Officers surrounded the suspects in a house late Monday, and chased them when they tried to run away, Sao Paulo's public safety department said in a statement.

Seized from the house was a bag of money emblazoned with the logo of the armored car company thieves reached by tunneling 150 yards (150 meters) into the firm's safe. The statement said just \$2,400 was recovered, along with a van thought to have been used in the heist.

Authorities said they have identified other suspects thought to have taken part in the robbery, and were searching for them. Those arrested, ranging in age from 20 to 31, were identified only by their initials. The detained woman told authorities she was a housewife. The men arrested listed their jobs as driver, salesman and mechanic. All denied involvement in the robbery, police said. □

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Chávez busca beneficiarse de purga bancaria en Venezuela

CARACAS (Reuters) - El presidente venezolano, Hugo Chávez, buscaba el lunes tranquilizar el nerviosismo del público y ganar algún beneficio político de una purga en el sector bancario del país que costó la salida de uno de sus cercanos aliados y estremeció el mundo financiero.

El mandatario se vio obligado a sacrificar al ministro de Ciencia, Tecnología e Industrias Intermedias (MCTI), Jesse Chacón, el fin de semana luego de que el hermano del ex funcionario resultó implicado en el mal manejo de uno de los siete bancos intervenidos por el Gobierno.

La renuncia de Chacón, un antiguo compañero de armas del presidente que formó parte un intento de golpe de Estado en 1992 que siguió a uno comandado por Chávez meses antes, es ahora la baja más significativa de una purga en la banca que al inicio desató pánico en inversionistas y ahorristas.

Pero, mientras la oposición asegura que el socialista Chávez es culpable por permitir que una nueva clase de empresarios super millonarios con fuertes lazos con el Gobierno compre y

abuse de bancos, el Presidente está tratando de ganar ventajas políticas con la limpieza del sector.

El país tendrá elecciones legislativas en septiembre y presidenciales en 2012 a las que Chávez dice se postulará. “El escándalo bancario hizo de Chávez un héroe anticorrupción”, ironizó el domingo el diario local El Universal, argumentando que estaba explotando engañosa pero exitosamente la pequeña crisis, desatada con menos del 10 por ciento de los depósitos del sector.

“En una nación donde no se mueve una hoja sin el visto bueno del presidente, y habiendo pruebas de que los ilícitos habían sido detectados desde principios de año (...) cualquier intento por lavarse las manos, alegando desconocimiento, termina siendo un argumento falaz”, dijo el periódico.

El fin de semana, Chávez prometió acabar cualquier enriquecimiento ilícito y urgió a sus seguidores a informarlo si veían funcionarios exhibiendo riquezas.

En un discurso antes de viajar hacia Montevideo para una reunión de Mercosur -bloque comercial al que Venezuela



Un miembro de la Guardia Nacional realiza una guardia frente a la sede central del Banco Canarias en Caracas, dic 3 2009. El presidente venezolano, Hugo Chávez, buscaba el lunes tranquilizar el nerviosismo del público y ganar algún beneficio político de una purga en el sector bancario del país que costó la salida de uno de sus cercanos aliados y estremeció el mundo financiero. REUTERS

espera entrar- Chávez dijo el lunes que su intención es regular mejor el sector y no nacionalizarlo.

“BANCOS ZOMBIES”

Chávez ha nacionalizado amplios sectores de la economía durante su década en el poder, incluyendo parte de la inmensa riqueza petrolera del país socio de la Organización de Países Exportadores de Petróleo (OPEP).

Pero analistas aseguran que no estaría a su alcance una nacionalización a gran escala de la banca, que causaría pánico y una probable corrida de fondos.

Aunque el impacto político de la purga bancaria aún no se ha sentido por completo, inversionistas y depositantes parecen concordar con Chávez en que no se camina hacia una gran crisis.

“La conclusión entre los inversionistas parece ser que esto no se extenderá en el corto plazo”, dijo el analista de IDEAglobal en Nueva

York, Enrique Alvarez.

El bono de referencia de Venezuela ganó cerca del 4 por ciento el lunes, una señal de que disminuyó la ansiedad de inversionistas. Mercados locales estaban cerrados por feriado religioso.

El Gobierno prometió retornar la mayoría de los ahorros en los bancos cerrados antes de Navidad. El plan es rehabilitar y unir a varios en una nueva entidad estatal, que permitiría reabrir al público el 21 de diciembre.

Analistas dicen que algunos bancos pequeños, primordialmente en manos de empresarios ligados al Gobierno, podrían enfrentar similares intervenciones pero que instituciones grandes tienen niveles de ganancias y capitalización sanos.

“Hay todavía una cantidad de bancos zombies en la cola del sector, pero el riesgo de una crisis financiera es improbable”, dijo Russell Dallen, de BBO Servicios Financieros en Caracas.

Además añadió que contiendas internas en los círculos gubernamentales, más que nacionalizaciones de gran envergadura, eran la fuerza motora detrás de la limpieza bancaria, “La mafia socialista está sacando la mafia capitalista”, dijo.

En la calle, los venezolanos, que recuerdan la crisis financiera de mediados de la década de 1990 que acabó con la mitad del sistema, estaban preocupados, pero no en pánico.

Colas más largas que lo habitual se formaron la semana pasada y algunos ahorristas trasladaron su dinero a instituciones de mayor tamaño.

Sin embargo, existen agudas divisiones entre las polarizadas filas políticas en Venezuela sobre a quién culpar.

Autoridades han encarcelado hasta ahora a ocho banqueros, incluyendo a Arné Chacón, hermano del ex ministro. Varias decenas de órdenes de arresto se han emitido, y algunos banqueros han huido del país. □

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Mercosur rechaza elección en Honduras

MONTEVIDEO (Reuters) - El bloque sudamericano Mercosur, junto a Venezuela, expresó el martes su rechazo al proceso electoral de Honduras, que calificó de "ilegal", y propuso relanzar las paralizadas negociaciones para buscar un difícil acuerdo comercial con la Unión Europea (UE). En el debate del que participaron los presidentes del bloque - Argentina, Brasil, Uruguay y Paraguay-, y de Venezuela, que aspira a sumarse al grupo, los mandatarios mostraron divergencias con el vicepresidente de Colombia y la canciller de México, presentes en la cumbre semestral del Mercosur, sobre cómo ayudar a Honduras a superar su crisis institucional. En el terreno comercial, la unión aduanera mantiene

conversaciones con la UE desde hace más de una década para un acuerdo, pero las tratativas han naufragado por diferencias respecto al intercambio agrícola e industrial. "Lo hemos comprometido todos los presidentes del Mercosur de avanzar decididamente en ese proyecto de intercambio, de relacionamiento con la UE, que está lamentablemente estancado, pero que felizmente podemos relanzar y lo haremos muy rápidamente", dijo el jefe de Estado de Uruguay, Tabaré Vázquez, a cargo de la presidencia rotativa del bloque. "Estamos abocados a lograr el acuerdo entre la Unión Europea y el Mercosur", dijo por su parte la presidenta de Argentina, Cristina Fernández. La próxima reunión entre



El presidente paraguayo, Fernando Lugo; la presidenta argentina, Cristina Fernández; y el presidente de Uruguay, Tabaré Vázquez, posan para la prensa en Montevideo, 8 dic 2009. REUTERS/Andres Stapff

el bloque Mercosur y la Unión Europea se realizará en mayo en Madrid. En el debate entre los presidentes,

los jefes de Estado de Paraguay y Venezuela, Fernando Lugo y Hugo Chávez respectivamente,

advirtieron sobre el peligro que representaría para la región la crisis institucional de Honduras. □

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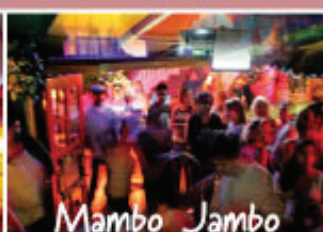
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